

**Fisheries Committee Meeting
May 12, 2017
Ken Lake State Park, Kentucky**

Committee Members: Chairman Rusty Gailor, Frank Williams, Dr. Karl Clinard, and Harry Carloss, MD

AGENDA

- I. Discussion Item – Beaver Lake: Remove Largemouth Bass 15-inch Minimum Size Limit**
- II. Discussion Item – Taylorsville Lake: Increase Crappie minimum Length limit to 10 Inches**
- III. Discussion Item – Benjy Kinman Lake: Crappie, Sunfish, and Bluegill Harvest Regulations to Statewide**
- IV. Discussion Item – Willisburg Park Pond: Add Special Fish Harvest Regulations**
- V. Discussion Item – FINS: Restrict Possession or Use of Live Shad for Bait**
- VI. Discussion Item – FINS: Addition of 5 New Lakes; Removal of 3 Lakes**
- VII. Discussion Item – Beech Fork Reservoir: 15-inch Largemouth Bass Minimum Size Limit and Daily Limit of 15 Bluegills**
- VIII. Discussion Item – Statewide Crappie Daily Creel Limit of 20**
- IX. Discussion Item – Barren River Lake: Blue Catfish Regulations Same As Taylorsville**
- X. Discussion Item –Statewide Trout Daily Creel Limit: 8 Rainbow; 1 Brown Trout and Minimum of 16-inches**
- XI. Discussion Item – In Lakes Stocked with Catfish: 12” Minimum Size Limit**

- XII. Discussion Item – Change for Identification Information Concerning Jugs, Trot Lines, and Set-Line (Limb-Line) Fishing**
- XIII. Discussion Item – Dip Nets Legal Statewide**
- XIV. Discussion Item – Cleanup: All Shad Restrictions Refer to Live Shad**

I. Discussion Item – Beaver Lake: Remove Largemouth Bass 15-inch Minimum Size Limit

In 2000, a 15-inch size limit and 6-fish daily limit was applied for largemouth bass at Beaver Lake. The intent of the higher minimum length limit was to expand the largemouth bass population to provide increased predation on panfish. As a result, an outstanding panfish fishery developed; but largemouth bass densities have become over-crowded resulting in a consistent bottleneck of bass sizes ranging from 8.0 to 12.0 inches. Fisheries would like to reinstate statewide largemouth bass regulations will allow bass to be harvested prior to becoming adults. Over time, if sufficient numbers of the juvenile bass are harvested, the persistent size-related bottleneck caused by excessive recruitment could be eliminated.

II. Discussion Item – Taylorsville Lake: Increase Crappie minimum Length limit to 10 Inches

White crappie dominate the crappie fishery at Taylorsville Lake where they grow an average of 9.3 inches in two growing seasons. The crappies' relatively fast growth rates make them vulnerable to legal harvest before they reach sexual maturity; typically occurring in the spring following 2 full growing seasons (age 3+) when they average 10.4 inches. Taylorsville Lake black crappie are slower growing than the white crappie, and they are also vulnerable to harvest prior to maturity which occurs after 3 full growing seasons (age 4+) when they have attained a length of 10 inches.

The Fisheries Division proposes to increase the minimum size limit from 9 to 10 inches for crappie harvest. A 10-inch crappie minimum size limit could potentially improve their annual recruitment potential in Taylorsville Lake and reduce the severe cyclic nature of the lake's crappie fishery.

A Taylorsville Lake angler attitude survey completed in 2016 indicated that 62% of crappie anglers were dissatisfied with the 9-inch minimum size limit, and 85% of those dissatisfied preferred a 10-inch minimum size limit. That information is also consistent with correspondence received from anglers since that survey.

III. Discussion Item – Benjy Kinman Lake: Crappie, Sunfish, and Bluegill Harvest Regulations to Statewide

Stringent sunfish harvest regulations were initially created for Benjy Kinman Lake (Kentucky River WMA Boone Tract) in order to address expectations of a significant increase in fishing pressure after the lake was opened to the public. Sampling efforts have revealed that the crappie population is very abundant despite the increased harvest and growth is slow; indicating overpopulation. Concerning bluegill, the lake has an abundant gizzard shad population, which reduces bass predation on sunfish. With reduced predation, sunfish become overpopulated resulting in a drastic reduction in growth rates. In Benjy Kinman Lake, the majority of the bluegill are 3-5 inches long. Because of these issues, Fisheries recommends eliminating the special panfish regulations leaving only statewide restrictions on crappie and redear sunfish. The bass harvest restriction and catfish harvest regulation would remain in effect.

IV. Discussion Item – Willisburg Park Pond: Add Special Fish Harvest Regulations

KDFWR has a fisheries management agreement with the City of Willisburg concerning Willisburg Park Pond. The city has set FINS-like regulations and have requested that KDFWR formally propose the same regulations so that our officers can enforce them. The regulations are as follows: 1) channel catfish: 4 fish daily limit; no size limit; 2) sunfish: 15 fish daily limit; no size limit; and 3) largemouth bass: 1 fish daily limit; 15-inch size limit. The city already has signage for these regulations.

V. Discussion Item – FINS Lakes: Restrict Use of Shad for Bait

Fisheries staff have removed shad from three FINS lakes over the past several years and will be removing them from six more lakes this year. We would like to decrease the chances of shad reintroductions or introductions into new lakes. Therefore, we propose a regulation stipulating that a person shall not possess live shad or use live shad as bait in any FINS lake. This is the same regulation currently in effect at the Sportsman's Lakes in Franklin County.

VI. Discussion Item – FINS Lakes: Addition of 5 New lakes; Removal of 3 Lakes

The Fishing-In-The-Neighborhood program (FINS) is constantly assessing its program to be sure that the ponds remain suitable for the program and is always looking for potential new ponds. Ponds must meet criteria to be in the program, and they must always meet those same criteria to remain in the program. Both Dickerson Lake (Ft. Knox) and Watterson Park Lake (Jefferson Co.) have very shallow water depth (average 2 feet). This poses an increased chance of fish kills and does not allow KDFWR staff to sample the lake. Martin County Lake (MILO; Martin Co.) is not located near an urban center and does not meet the FINS location criteria. As a result, these three lakes will be removed from the Program. Each of those lakes regulations will revert to statewide restrictions and Martin County Lake will continue to be stocked with species and numbers similar to the FINS program. Five new lakes to be added in regulation include: Logan Hubble Park Lake (Lincoln County), Kess Creek Park Lake (Graves County), Rotary Park Lake (Hickman County), Flemingsburg Old Reservoir (Fleming County), and Leary Lake (Grant County). The changes bring the number of FINS lakes to 43.

VII. Discussion Item – Beech Fork Reservoir: 15-inch Largemouth Bass Minimum Size Limit and a Daily limit of 15 Bluegills

Beech Fork Reservoir has very few largemouth bass over 12 inches in length and very few harvestable-sized bluegill due to over harvest. Therefore, Fisheries proposes a 15-inch minimum size limit for largemouth bass and a 15 fish daily creel limit for bluegill.

VIII. Discussion Item – Statewide Crappie Daily Creel Limit of 20

Crappie abundances in Kentucky reservoirs are very cyclic in nature. In part, this is due to excessive fishing pressure when harvestable fish are present. Several surveys have indicated that anglers would be in favor of reducing the statewide creel limit to 20 fish; which is currently the daily limit in Kentucky and Barkley lakes. In order to reduce harvest pressure

on crappie populations throughout the state, fisheries proposes a statewide daily creel limit of 20 crappie.

IX. Discussion Item – Barren River Lake: Blue Catfish Regulations

Blue catfish have been stocked in Barren River Lake for several years to establish a trophy fishery. Creel data collected in 2016 indicated that blue catfish are getting removed in large numbers before they attain 25-inches; similar to Taylorsville Lake prior to changing blue catfish harvest regulations. Barren River Lake's blue catfish fishery is still fairly new, and trophy-sized fish are just beginning to become available to anglers. In order to perpetuate the trophy aspect of the blue catfish in Barren River Lake, Fisheries proposes a 15-fish daily limit, of which only 1 may be longer than 25 inches. These are the same regulations in effect for Taylorsville, Fishtrap and Dewey lakes' blue catfish.

X. Discussion Item – Statewide Trout Daily Creel Limit: 8 Rainbow; 1 Brown Trout and 16-inch Minimum

Current statewide regulations for rainbow trout and brown trout is an aggregate limit that allows 8 fish to be harvested daily of which 3 may be brown trout. This regulation does not reflect the fact that KDFWR only stocks brown trout in areas where there is a potential for survival throughout the year and where brown trout may attain trophy sizes; which is the primary reason the department stocks brown trout. Therefore, Fisheries proposes to change the statewide trout regulations to allow a daily total of 8 rainbow trout to be harvested, and a daily limit of only 1 brown trout of which is at least 16 inches long. This regulation change adequately protects brown trout to ensure a trophy aspect is conveyed and still allows anglers a daily harvest of 8 rainbow trout.

XI. Discussion Item – In Lakes Stocked with Catfish: 12” Minimum Size Limit

Fisheries proposes a statewide, standard 12-inch minimum size limit on all catfish species in lakes stocked with catfish by KDFWR. The regulation would include lakes stocked with both blue and channel catfish. This is a regulation that, according to several surveys, anglers have favored for several years. Anglers want to have the opportunity to catch quality-sized catfish, and in some areas, the stocked catfish do not attain 12” prior to being harvested. This will also help increase survival of blue catfish in the trophy lakes.

XII. Discussion Item – Change for Identification Information Concerning Jugs, Trot Lines, and Set-Line (Limb-Line) Fishing

A number of anglers using these special gears have complained that having their names and addresses attached to the gears makes them vulnerable to or accessible to the general public who may oppose the use of these gears for catching and harvesting fish. They have requested to replace their personal information on the gears with their “Customer Identification Number” provided on their fishing licenses. The numbers could be traced to the gears’ owners by law enforcement officers, but they gear owners will not be exposed to potential unwanted contact with the public.

XIII. Discussion Item – Dip Nets Legal Statewide

Dip nets are currently only legal to use for catching bait in several large rivers and in reservoirs having over 1,000 acres or more of surface area. Meanwhile, seines are legal in all waters. There is no apparent biological reason for this discrepancy. Since the restricted use is not defensible in a court of law, Fisheries recommends removing all restrictions concerning where dip nets may be used to legally collect baitfish.

XV. Discussion Item – Cleanup: All Shad Restrictions Refer to Live Shad

KDFWR has a regulation that restricts shad as fish bait on several lakes. Gizzard shad are native to riverine habitats, but are detrimental to management of healthy pond and small reservoir ecosystems. Since shad are preferred or more targeted by largemouth bass and other fish-eating fish, their presence results in overabundant panfish numbers and stunted populations. Therefore, shad restrictions were meant to refer to live fish; not dead or preserved shad often purchased from retailers in packages as bait. It is not KDFWR's intention to unduly reduce bait choices that our angler have available, nor to create the potential for the public to unwittingly break regulations by using a natural, preserved bait that is not a potential detriment to our aquatic ecosystems. Therefore, Fisheries would like to provide the distinction in our regulations that references to shad restrictions means live shad only; not dead or packaged shad used for bait.